Department of Religion Newsletter

Fall 2005

The Department of Religion has decided that it would be a great idea to revive its newsletter. We hope that this newsletter will be informative and keep both present and former students and colleagues in touch with the Department. Here are a few opening words from the Chair of the Department, Dr. Norma Joseph.

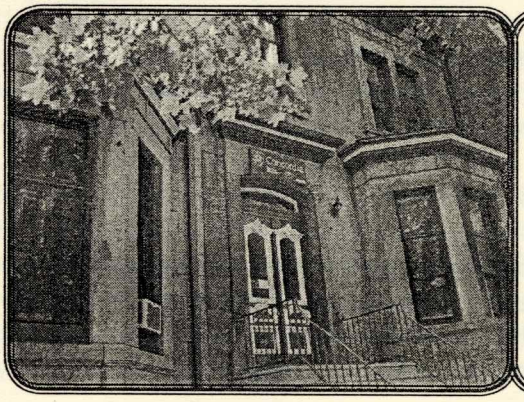
The Department is experiencing wonderful growth and is happy to be able to provide a wide array of courses in many religious traditions and areas of interest. Both our undergraduate and graduate programs have seen an increase in enrollments and despite our department being small, our graduate program boasts an impressive number of students. Many of our undergraduate courses are bursting at the seams, especially those that can be used to fulfill the General Education requirement that was introduced to the University curriculum a couple of years ago. Despite our larger class sizes, we pride ourselves in being available to our students and maintaining good interaction in our classes.

Of 10 endowed chairs at Concordia University, our department of religion holds two: the Chair in Hindu Studies (the only one of its kind in North America), and the Chair in Quebec and Canadian Jewish Studies with an accompanying Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies.

Upcoming Events

Monday September 19, 2005 Lecture by Dr. Norma Joseph
"Eating Jewish: Are We What We Eat?"

Friday September 23, 2005
Colloquium by Dr. Lynda Clarke
"Muslim Law Primer" - An Entry in the Ontario Shariah Controversy



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New Faculty Members

We have recently hired two new limited term appointments, Dr. Marc Lalonde in the area of Christianity and Dr. Richard Foltz in the area of Islam. Dr. Lalonde completed his PhD at Concordia and has been teaching in our Department as a part-time instructor for a number of years and has also held an LTA position with us in the past. He is a wonderful and well-liked professor and we are very happy to have him teach full-time with us again. Dr. Lalonde's primary area of research is Modern and Postmodern Religious Thought (Jewish and Christian), Critical Social Theory and History of Ideas (Biblical era to the 19th century). Dr. Foltz holds a PhD in History and Middle Eastern Studies from Harvard University. Before coming to Concordia, Dr. Foltz taught at the University of Florida in the Department of Religion. He has an impressive publication history with several books, chapters in books and a number of articles in journals and encyclopedias among others. We are pleased to announce that we have renewed Steven Lindquist's term as the LTA in Hindu Studies. Mr. Lindquist is currently completing his PhD at the University of Texas – Austin and has broad training in modern and ancient Indian religions as well as religious studies. We are also very excited about hiring Dr. Marc des Jardins as our new tenure-track person in the area of East Asian Religions. Dr. des Jardins received his PhD from McGill University in East Asian Studies. His primary areas of research are Pan-Asian Buddhism, Tibetan Religions, Chinese popular cults and religions. In addition to his PhD, Dr. des Jardins also obtained a doctorate in Traditional Chinese Medicine from the College of Chinese Traditional Medicine and Culture. Dr. des Jardins is currently on a research trip in Tibet. We will give you an update in our next issue.. We know that these additions to our team will make our Department even more dynamic than it already is and we look forward to welcoming the newcomers.

Sabbaticals and Leaves

Beginning in September 2005 Dr. Frederick Bird will take a one year leave of absence to accompany his wife, Frances Westley, who has accepted a position as the Director of the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin. Dr. Bird is a Concordia University Research Chair in Comparative Ethics. While on leave, Dr. Bird will continue to supervise gradaute students, work on his research as well as co-edit a book "Voices from the Voluntary Sector".

Dr. Lynda Clarke was on sabbatical during the past year. Dr. Clarke has been preparing a short history of Shiite theology, covering the early stage of the development of Twelver Shiism, including the rise of the religious class and development of the law. The work challenges current views by demonstrating that Shiism had already at an early stage ceased to be an inward-turning minority. In collaboration with Ontario lawyer P. Cross, Prof. Clarke has also produced the "Family Law Primer: Canadian and Muslim Family Law." The work, which is intended for legal professionals and their clients, was commissioned by the Canadian federal government through the Canadian Council for Muslim Women, apropos of the Ontario Shariah law controversy. The "Primer" is being published in full form in English and French, and will later appear in a condensed version in Arabic, Somali, etc. The Muslim section covers the classical law, modern developments, and the private use of Muslim law in North America, based partly on fieldwork and relevant Canadian court cases.

In the last year, Dr. Clarke has given papers on "Ayatollah Mutahhari: The Construction of Liberal-Conservatism" in Tehran, Iran; "Taqiyah: Social and Doctrinal Strategies" (on the Druze religion) at the Middle East Centre of St. Anthony's College, Oxford; and lecture & panel in the summer school in NYC on "Religious Diversity in America" for independent school teachers sponsored by the Interfaith Center of New York & U. of Pennsylvania Grad. School of Education. She has given a series of twelve lectures on women & gender in Islam for the "Organisation for Islamic Learning" in Toronto, Canada, along with "The Role of Reason in Shiism: Aql in Theology and Jurisprudence"; and will participate in August at Dartmouth College in the Ford Foundation Institute on Gender in Jewish and Islamic Studies.

Dr. Jack Lightstone is returning from a one year administrative leave after serving first as Associate Vice-Rector, Academic and then as Provost at Concordia University for over 10 years. Dr. Lightstone will return to teach full-time in the department in the area of ancient Judaism.

Dr. Leslie Orr was on sabbatical during the 2004-05 academic year. During her sabbatical Dr. Orr made two research trips to India -- three weeks in September 2004, during which time she consulted the texts of unpublished inscriptions at the Epigraphy Office of the Archaeological Survey of India in Mysore; and six weeks in December/January/ February, which was dedicated for the most part to visiting temples in Tamilnadu, in South India -- Dr. Orr came back with over 1600 photographs and much other material relating to the research projects for which she has recently received funding and to work in progress (e.g. upcoming conference presentations).

In the 2005-06 academic year Dr. Norman Ravvin will be going on a one year sabbatical. Dr. Ravvin is the Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies and will be replaced during his sabbatical year by Dr. Ira Robinson. Dr. Ravvin was awarded tenure in 2004 and a five year renewal as Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies - we congratulate him.

Faculty Publications and Conference Presentations

We thought that you might be interested to read what some of our faculty are working on so here is a glimpse of some publications that have either been published or are in press.

Dr. Frederick Bird

In 2004 Frederick Bird published two books: a) International Businesses and the Challenges of Poverty in the Developing World: Case Studies in Nigeria, Ghana, Uganda, Vietnam, Guyana and Northern Quebec and b) International Business and the Dilemmas of Development: Case Studies in South Africa, Madagascar, Pakistan, South Korea, Mexico, and Colombia. Both books were published by Palgrave-Macmillan in the UK. He published two essays: "Fostering the Common Good in Developing Countries" in The Invisible Hand and the Common Good, ed. Bernard Hodgson, and "Moral Muteness," in the Encyclopedia of Business Ethics, ed Pat Werhane. Together with Professor Wes Cragg from York University, he has helped to organize a cross-country research cluster on business ethics. In May 2005 he organized a two day colloquium on "Globalization, Religion, and the Pursuit of Global Ethics."

Dr. Donald Boisvert

Dr. Boisvert had a new book published in October 2004: Sanctity and Male Desire: A Gay Reading of Saints (Pilgrim Press). It's been selected as a finalist in the religion/ spirituality category for this year's Lambda Literary Awards. Dr. Boisvert has a third book, co-edited, that was recently published by Haworth Press: Gay Catholic Priests and Clerical Sexual Misconduct: Breaking the Silence. He also has a chapter entitled: "The Sprit Within: Gay Male Culture as Spiritual Venue" that was published in a recent book entitled Gay Religion, published by Altamira Press. Dr. Boisvert has been appointed co-chair for a second term of the Gay Men's Issues in Religion Group of the American Academy of Religion.

Dr. Michel Despland

Dr. Despland is continuing his research work on religious and intellectual conflicts in France over sacrifice. He is also working on images in the history of the Christian religion showing books and of people reading. Dr. Despland attended a conference on religious pluralism in Jojyakatrta and Semarang (Indonesia) September – October 2004 and was a key note speaker at a conference on the theme of "Religious Studies in Canada: Past, Present and Future" at the University of Ottawa (May 2005). The title of Dr. Despland's paper was "Is there a Tradition in Religious Studies in Canada?"

Dr. Philip Harland

In November, 2004 Dr. Harland gave a lecture on "Acculturation and Identity in the Diaspora: A Jewish Family and 'Pagan' Guilds at Hierapolis" at the Society of Biblical Literature, Hellenistic Judaism Section. Dr. Harland also presented a paper at the Canadian Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Manitoba) in May 2004. In 2003 Dr. Harland's Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations: Claiming a Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society was published by Fortress Press and in 2005 his book "The Declining Polis? Religious Rivalries in Ancient Civic Context." In Leif E. Vaage, ed.: Religious Rivalries and the Struggle for Success: Methodological Papers. Studies in Judaism and Christianity. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, was accepted. Dr. Harland has the following book in press: "Spheres of Contention, Claims of Preeminence: Rivalries Among Associations in Sardis and Smyrna." In Richard S. Ascough, ed.: Religious Rivalries and the Struggle for Success in Sardis and Smyrna. Studies in Judaism and Christianity. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

Dr. Norma Joseph

Dr. Joseph is frequently asked to give guest lectures and present at several conferences, universities and community organizations every year. She currently has the following publications that are forthcoming: "Jewish Law and Gender", Encyclopedia of Women & Religion in America, eds. Rosemary Keller and Rosemary Radford Reuther (Indiana University Press); "Rabbi Moses Feinstein and Jewish Women", Jewish Women: A Comprehensive historical encyclopedia (Shalvi Publishing Ltd, Jerusalem).

Dr. Jack Lightstone

Dr. Lightstone has the following that have been accepted for publication: "My Rival, My Fellow: Prolegomena to the Study of Rivalry and Cooperation among Religious Groups in the Galilee of Late Antiquity," in L. E. Vaage, ed., Religious Rivalries and the Struggle for Success: Methodological Papers. Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, forthcoming 2005. "Urbanization in the Roman Levant and the Inter-religious Struggle for Success," in Richard Ascough, ed., Religious Rivalries and the Struggle for Success in Sardis and Smyrna. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, forthcoming 2005. "Early Rabbinic Writings, the Formation

of the Early Rabbinic Guild, and Roman Governance," in Ian Henderson and Gerbern Oegema eds., The Changing Face of Judaism, Christianity and Other Greco-Roman Religions in Antiquity, in the series, Jewish Writings from the Greco-Roman Period, Studies, Herman Lichtenberger and Gerbern Oegema eds., Tuebingen: Guetersloher Verlagshaus, forthcoming in 2005. "Minority Religions in the Roman Empire: The Case of Diaspora Judaism." Invited lecture at the University of Miami; co-sponsored by the Miller Center for Judaic Studies and the Department of Classics, Miami, March 2005. "The Pharisees and the Sadducees in the Earliest Rabbinic Documents," in Jacob. Neusner and Bruce D. Chilton eds, What Do We Really Know about the Phraisees, and How Do We Know It? Waco TX: Baylor University Press, forthcoming in 2007.

Dr. Michael Oppenheim

Dr. Oppenheim has recently completed a manuscript, Narrating the Interhuman: Jewish Philosophy and Psychoanalysis". The manuscript is currently under review. Dr. Oppenheim gave a presentation on Feminist Jewish Philosophy at the December 2004 meeting of the Association for Jewish Studies. In February 2005, a new translation of Franz Rosenweig's The Star of Redemption was published, for which he did the short Foreward.

Dr. Leslie Orr

Dr. Orr has done the "Preface" for "to Pondicherry Inscriptions/ Putucceri manilak kalvettukkal", Pondicherry: Ecole française d'extreme-orient which is currently in press. Dr. Orr has the following chapter forthcoming: "Domesticity and Difference/ Women and Men: Religious Life in Medieval Tamilnadu." In "Women's Lives, Women's Rituals in the Hindu Tradition", ed. Tracy Pintchman. New York: Oxford University Press.

Dr. Susan Palmer

Dr. Palmer's book: "Aliens Adored: Rael's UFO Religion" was published by Rutgers University Press in October 2004.

Dr. Norman Ravvin

Norman Ravvin is a critic, fiction writer, and journalist. He is also Chair in Quebec and Canadian Jewish Studies. His essays on Canadian and American Jewish literature are collected in A House of Words: Jewish Writing, Identity, and Memory (McGill-Queens). The essays included in this volume focus on such writers as Eli Mandel, Leonard Cohen, Saul Bellow, Philip Roth, Mordecai Richler, and Chava Rosenfarb. A House of Words also considers the role of multiculturalism, postcolonialism, and the Holocaust in the reception of Canadian writing. Recent articles include an essay on memory tourism in Poland in Canadian Literature, a chapter on Jewish identity in a collection called Religion and Ethnicity in Canada, and an introduction to the reissue of Gwethalyn Graham's Earth and High Heaven from Cormorant Books. He is at work on a collection of short stories, a novel set in Poland, and a study of postwar Jewish identity in Canada and South Africa. As general editor of a series in association with Red Deer Press at the University of Calgary and the Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies, he oversees the publication of books dedicated to Canadian Jewish writing and history. Among the publications from the Institute is Mordecai & Me: An Appreciation of a Kind, by Joel Yanofsky. Norman Ravvin acted as editor of this study, which won a number of awards in Canada and the United States. The forthcoming title from the Institute and Red Deer Press is Henry Kreisel's 1948 novel, The Rich Man, with a new introduction by Ravvin. He also oversees two chapbook series published by the Institute, which focus on Canadian Jewish literature and history. The titles in these series include a long short story by Toronto writer Cary Fagan, and a translation of a document dealing with early Montreal Jewish history, by Ira Robinson.

Dr. Ira Robinson

Ira Robinson's current research interests center on the adaptation of traditional Judaism in North America from the late nineteenth century to the Second World War, as well as the thought of Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides). He is preparing a book entitled Rabbis and Their Community: The Eastern European Rabbinate in Montreal, 1896-1930. He is also collaborating with Professor Michael Nehorai of Bar-Ilan University a book on Maimonides' Treatise on Repentance. His most recent publications are: "The Jews in Canada (in North America): an Eastern European View of the Montreal Jewish Community in 1884", Canadian Jewish Studies Chapbook Series No.1 (Montreal, HUNGRY I BOOKS, 2004), pp. 1-30; "Cyrus Adler and The American: a Moment in the Intellectual History of American Jewry", in Jay Harries, ed. Be'erot Yitzhak: Studies in Memory of Isadore Twersky (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Center for Jewish Studies, 2005), pp. 179-191.

Dr.T.S.Rukmani

Dr. T.S. Rukmani is the Chair in Hindu Studies, the only one of its kind in North America. Here is a sampling of Dr. Rukmani very busy schedule: invited keynote speaker at the

World Association for Vedic Studies Conferece, Washington, D.C. July, 2004; taught an intensive Advaita Vedanta cousre at Dartmough Campus, Massachusetts University, August, 2004; presented a paper at the International Association for History of Religion Conference, Tokyo, Japan, March 2005. Dr. Rukmani's recent publications and research and allied activities include: The Mahabharata: Whatever is not Here is Nowhere Else (Ed) (New Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal, 2005); "Dharmaputra in the Context of Rajadharma and Apaddharma in the Santiparvan" in The Mahabharata: What is Not Here is Nowhere Else, (Ed) T.S.Rukmani (New Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal Pvt Ltd, 2005); "Revisiting the concept of Jivanmukti in Sankhya" in Essays in the Theory and Practice of Yoga in Honour of Gerald James Larson, (Ed) Knut Jacobsen, (2005); "Rtambhara Prajna as the Truth Bearing Entity in Patanjalis Yogasutra" in Brahma-Vidya Adyar Library Bulletin, vol. 67, 2005.

Graduate News

February 3, 2005 saw the tenth annual graduate students' interdisciplinary conference. The theme of this year's conference was "Embodied Religion: Manifestations in the Mundane". The number and quality of the papers presented were very impressive, with participants from not only Concordia but from across Canada. Congratulations to the conference organizers for a great job. We look forward to seeing the next issue of the Journal of Religion and Culture in the fall.

We've had several of our graduate students present papers at conferences both in Canada and oversees. Two of our graduate students presented at the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion which took place last spring in Winnipeg. **Laurie Lamoureux-Scholes**, (Phd), presented her paper "Traditional Religion and Contemporary Death Rituals in Canada" and **Andrea Gondos** (M.A. Judaic Studies) presented her paper "Mysticism revisited in the context of feminine Jewish thought and the polemic of Franz Rosenzweig and Martin Buber".

Kathryn Snook, (M.A. H&P) presented her paper "The Absence of the Buddha Image in Early Buddhist Art: A Discussion of Various Theories" at the Hawaii Interntional Conference on Arts and Humanities in January 2005.

In December 2004, **Daniel Bernard** (PhD) presented a paper at the Association for Jewish Studies conference in Chicago. His paper was entitled "The Rhetorics and Social Meanings of the Avot Commentary: Toward the History of a Genre".

Farah Kawtharani (PhD) presented her paper "Religion and civil society: An Investigation in the Social Institutions of the Hisbullah Islamist Movement in Lebanon" at the Religion and Politics in the Age of Globalization conference in Mexico in March 2005.

Carolyn Shaffer (M.A. H&P) presented her paper "Brushing History Against the Grain: Israel's 'New Historians'" at the History Across the Disciplines conference at Dalhousie University in March 2005.

Sharon Gubbay-Helfer (PhD) presented her paper: " Reconstructing Jewish Identity in a Distinct Society: an Introduction to Lavy M. Becker of Montreal " at the Columbia Religion Graduate Students Conference.

Tanisha Ramachandran (PhD) presented as follows: "Featuring Kali: Orientalism and Imperialism in Hollywood" at the AAR - Eastern International Regional Meeting in May 2005;

"Socks, Shoes and Toilet Seats: The Commoditization of Hindu Imagery in the Western Market" at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies in Chicago, April 2005;

Guest Lecture "Dildos, Knives and Flapping Tongues: The Appropriation of the Hindu Goddess by Western Feminism" St. Lawrence University, Canton, New York, April 2005.

Thesis Defenses

The following students successfully defended their doctoral theses:

Deidre Butler, January 2005. The title of her thesis was: Disturbing Boundaries: Developing Jewish Feminist Ethics with Buber, Levinas and Fackenheim.

Maxine Jacobson, March 2005 and her title was: Trends in Modern Orthodoxy as Reflected in the Career of Rabbi Dr. Leo Jung.

Carla Salvati, May 2005 and her thesis was: "The Relics of the Stigmat of St. Francis of Assisi".

Nalini Devdas, Spring 2004 and the title of her thesis was: "A Study of Cetana and the Dynamics of Volition in Theravada Buddhism".

At the Spring 2004 convocation the following students graduated from our M.A. programs:

Francisca Johnpulle, Céline Leduc, Seyedeh-Tahmineh Mousavi, Katerina Wigston all from the History and Philosophy of Religion. From our M.A. in Judaic Studies graduate: Cecylia Shulman and Sara Tauben.

From our undergraduate programs 11 of our students graduated, two with Distinction and one with Great

Distinction – Sohrob Nabatian - who has now started his Master's degree at Harvard University.

And at the fall 2004 convocation, we had 4 undergraduates graduating, one with Distinction and the other, Fiacre O'Duinn, with Great Distinction. Patricia Aldred graduated from the M.A. in H&P and Donna Goodman and Lois Whitmore from the M.A. Judaic Studies. Donna has started her PhD with us.

Awards

Steven Lapidus (PhD) received the Carolyn and Richard Renaud Teaching Assistantship Award

Tanisha Ramachandran (PhD) received the Power Corporation award

Linda Darwish (PhD) also received the Power Corporation award

Kirsten Hansen (new PhD) received the Gold Entrance Scholarship

Carolyn Shaffer (M.A.) was awarded the Silver Medal in Literature, Arts and Humanities at the Salon national de la recherche universitaire.

Laurie Lamoureux-Scholes (PhD) was awarded an SSHRC CGS Doctoral Award.

We celebrated the successes of our graduates, award winners, research grant recipients and department in general at a celebration that took place on June 12, 2005.

We wish all of our graduands much success in their future endeavours and look forward to hearing from them.

Other News

AAR Regional Conference – Eastern International Regional Meeting
McGill University, Montreal May 6-7, 2005

A number of our faculty and students presented at the AAR Regional meeting in May which takes place at McGill University in Montreal. Dr. Leslie Orr was kind enough to do this write-up on the conference.

The American Academy of Religion Eastern International Region held its annual meeting in Montreal on May 6-7, 2005. The conference was hosted by McGill University's Faculty of Religious Studies, but among the organizers was one of our own graduate students, Laurie Lamoureux Scholes. Concordia's graduate students and faculty from the Department of Religion made a brilliant showing at this conference. The presentations from members of the Department that I heard (apart from my own co-authored paper with Katherine Young of McGill University on "The Evolution of Tamil Devotional Literature as Canon and Liturgy") were all extremely interesting and very well-received. They included: doctoral student Susan Landau-Chark's "The Public Role of the Rabbi's Wife," which wove together in its analysis Susan's interview-based research, popular fiction, and neglected histories; a lively presentation by M.A. student Michelle Bakker and Ph.D. student Dan Bernard based on their research on the theme of consumerism in the best-selling evangelical Left Behind novels; and doctoral student Tanisha Ramachandran's fascinating "Featuring Kali: Orientalism and Imperialism in Hollywood," which used film clips to show how a Hindu goddess has been represented in American cinema. Bilal Kuspinar, a part-time teacher in our Department, was the leader of a group presenting one of the conference's keynote performances, a program of beautiful Turkish and Arabic spiritual music from Anatolia. Other presentations by Concordia students and faculty included: M.A. student Carolyn Shaffer's paper on "Depictions of Jews and Christians in the Stories of Jalal al-Din Rumi's Masnavi," M.A. student Barbara Weiser's "The Book of Ruth, a Different Dimension," doctoral student Steven Lapidus' paper on "A Haitian Vodou Ceremony in Montreal," Professor Donald Boisvert's "Storytelling, Sensual Language and the Politics of Desire: A Personal Tale," and part-time teacher Susan Palmer's presentation with filmmaker Paul Greenhouse on "The Nuwaubian Controversy: Racialist Religion and Law Enforcement."

The Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies

The Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies organized several lectures and events. Here is a list of just a handful of these events:

May 1st, 2004: Lecture by Dr. Norman Ravvin
Matt Cohen's "Cosmic Spine": Recovering Spadina Avenue's Jewish Landscape 3rd Annual Congress of Polish Association for Canadian Studies, Place and Memory in Canada: Global Perspectives.Cracow, Poland

May 10th, 2004: Lecture by Dr. Norman Ravvin
Joshua Then and Now, Centre for Jewish History, YIVO,

September 16th, 2004: Release of Institute Publication
The Jews in Canada (in North America Translated from Hebrew by Dr. Ira Robinson (board member).
September 20th, 2004: Lecture by Claudia Braude

(Writer/Journalist from South Africa)Writing the Story of the Jewish Presence in South Africa)Samual Bronfman Building
Attended by representatives from the South African High Commission in Ottawa, Mr. Patrick Jacobs, First Secretary and Mr. Prince Mnisi, Third Secretary.

October 31st, 2004: Lecture by Dr. Norman Ravvin
The Memory of the Offence - Writing and the Second World War.

November 25th, 2004: Lecture and Reading by Dr. Norman Ravvin. What is Canadian Jewish Identity in Canada? Mount Royal College, Calgary

November 25th, 2004: Lecture by Dr. Norman Ravvin Hidden Canada: An Intimate Travelogue and Lola by Night Jewish Book Fair, Calgary JCC

January 26th, 2005: Lecture by Steven Lapidus "Male and female He created them": Gender in Judaism

February 14th, 2005: Lecture by Dr. Norma Joseph "Jewish History: Women as the Missing Picture"

March 3rd, 2005: Panel Discussion: The Star of Redemption With Dr. Barbara Galli, Dr. Michael Oppenheim & Dr. Elliot Wolfson

March 10th, 2005: Lecture by Dr. Norman Ravvin: The Rise and Fall of Leonard Cohen.

Activities of the Chair in Hindu Studies

(May 2004 – April 2005)

Lectures, Conferences, Presentations

Invited keynote speaker at the World Association for Vedic Studies Conference, Washington, D.C. July 8-11.

Taught an intensive Advaita Vedanta course at Dartmouth Campus, Massachusetts University, August 30

Gave two lectures on Advaita Vedanta and Astanga Yoga at Val Morin Vedanta Asrama, August 26 and 27.

Respondent for Professor Arvind Sharma's paper on Hinduism at the 400th Guru Gobind Singh anniversary Sikh Conference at McGill University. The theme was: Universality and Justice, September 19.

Invited keynote speaker at the Conference of the Educators Society for the Heritage of India, Rutgers University, New Jersey, September 24-26.

Chaired a session on Advaita Vedanta at the AAR conference, San Antonio, November 19-21 (Also presented a paper).

2005 Lectures, Conferences, Presentations

Member of a panel discussion on CBC radio programme after the Tsunami tragedy, January 6, 2005.

Presented a series of 5 lectures at Bahamas Sivananda Yoga Retreat, January 15-29.

Gave an intensive course on Advaita Vedanta at the Hindu University of America, Orlando, Florida, February 11-13.

Presented a paper at the International Association for History of Religion Conference, Tokyo, Japan, March 24-30.

Publications

"Dharmaputra in the context of Rajadharma and Apaddharma in the Santiparvan" in The Mahabharata: Whatever is not here is nowhere else", New Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal, 2005.

"Revisiting the Concept of Jivanmukti in Samkhya" in Felicitation volume for Gearld Larson, Holland: Reidel Publications, 2005.

"Rtambhara Prajna as theTruth bearing entity in Patanjali's Yogasutras" in Brahma Vidya, Adyar Theosophcal Society Journal, vol. 67, 2005.

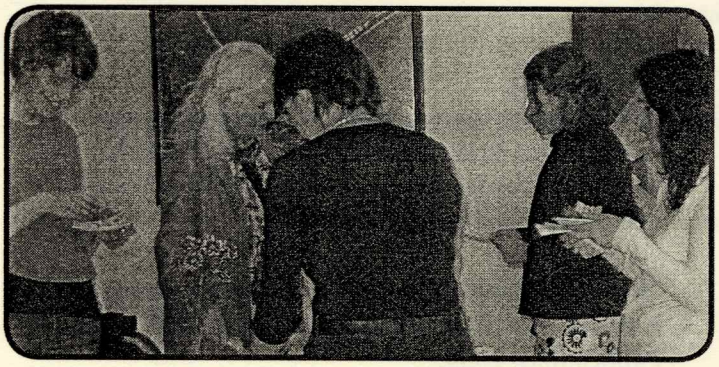
"Value Ethics in the Early Upanisads: A Hermeneutic Study" in (ed) Arvind Sharma.

The Journal of Religion and Culture

The Journal of Religion and Culture is pleased to announce that volume 17 will be published this fall and the editors would like to invite students and faculty in Religious Studies to subscribe to the latest edition for $10.00. If you would like to work on the Journal or if you would like information on subscribing to the Journal or submitting an article or book review for consideration, please contact Michelle Folk at m_folk@alcor.concordia.ca

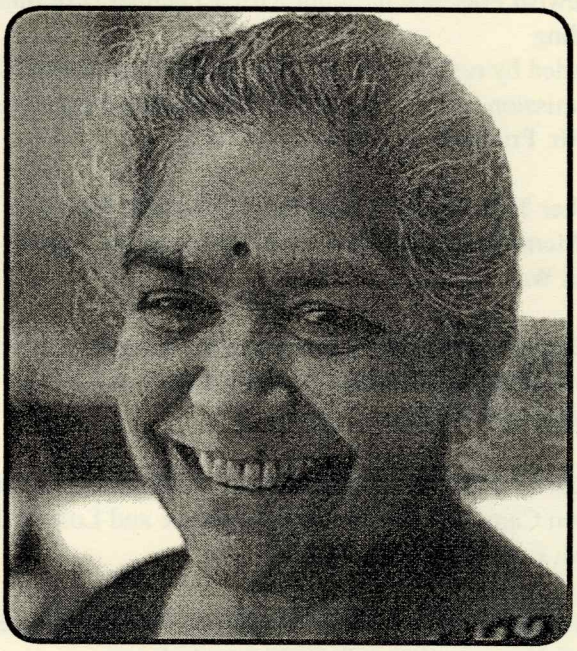
Here are some photographs of members of the Department

Award Winners
Congratulations to them all



Members of the department enjoying goodies

Members of the department making great music



Dr. T.S. Rukmani, Chair in Hindu Studies

Dr. Norman Ravvin, Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies

If you have any ideas for our next issue of the newsletter, please let us know - we'd be happy to incorporate your suggestions. You can send comments, ideas, suggestions to:
merid@vax2.concordia.ca